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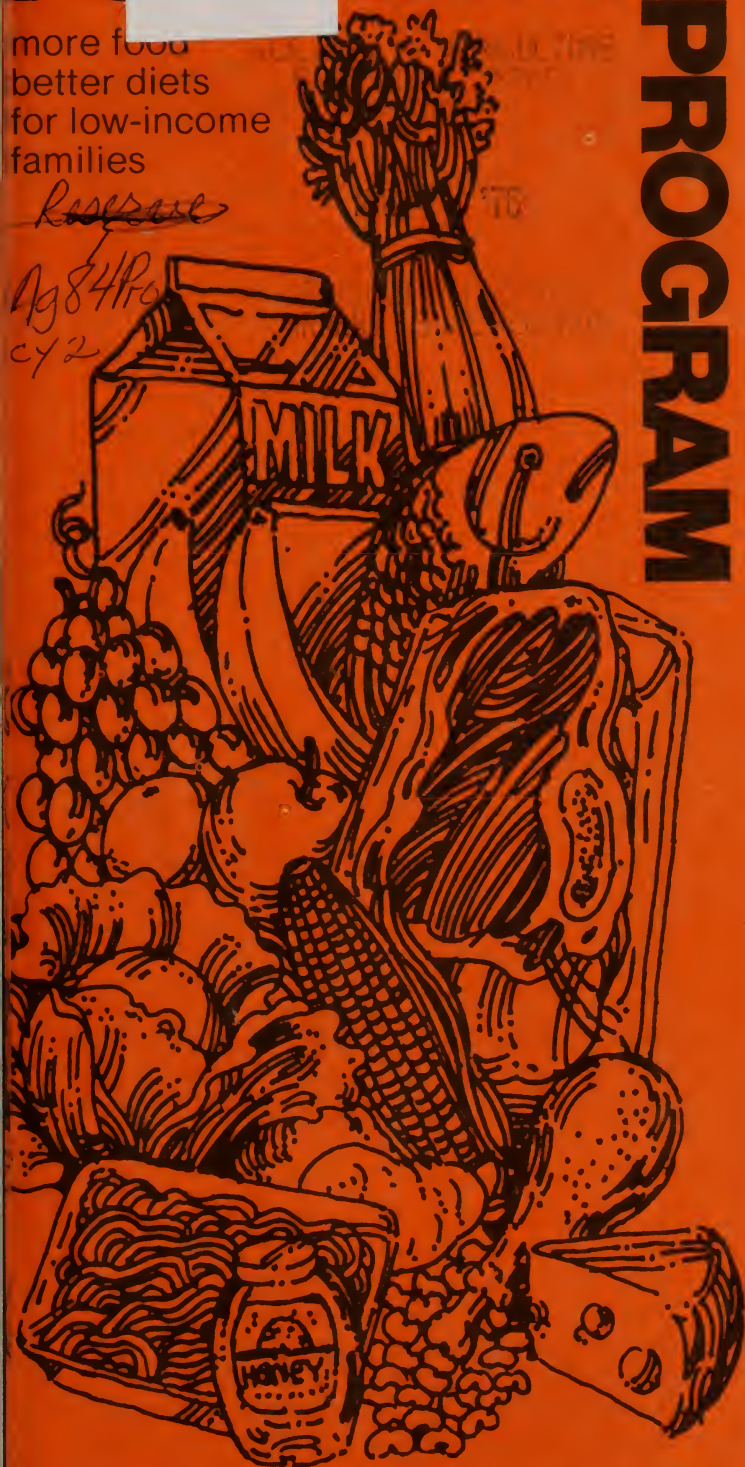


# FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

# 930

more food  
better diets  
for low-income  
families

*Roseville*  
*Ag 84 Pro*  
*CY 2*



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Program  
Aid No. 930

## THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Program is a cooperative activity of local, State, and Federal governments working together for a healthier America.

Under the program, food coupons—commonly referred to as food stamps—are used to supplement the food buying power of eligible low-income households. The program is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, and locally by the State welfare agencies.

The Food Stamp Program was created to improve the levels of nutrition among low-income households. Low-income families have many needs, but food is the most essential of all. It gives children the health they need in order to learn, and adults the energy they need in order to work.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Any family and any individual may take part in the Food Stamp Program if they are found by the local welfare agency to need food help. To qualify for food stamp benefits, households must meet certain nationwide eligibility standards, such as income and work registration. Except in special circumstances, food stamp households must be able to prepare meals.

The standards for participating in the Food Stamp Program are the same for everyone regardless of race, color, sex, religious creed, national origin, or political beliefs.

## HOW IT OPERATES

Participants in the Food Stamp Program increase their food buying power by paying a small sum of money and receiving a larger value of food coupons. These coupons can be spent like money in retail food stores authorized by USDA to accept them. The amount of money participants pay for their coupons is based on family size and net monthly income. For the very poor, the coupons are free.

The coupons may be used to buy any food or food product for human consumption. But non-food items—such as pet food, soap, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages and paper goods—*cannot* be bought with food coupons. Coupons may never be exchanged for cash.

USDA approves food retailers to accept food coupons, and the retailers agree to follow the rules for accepting and redeeming the coupons. Food retailers turn the coupons in to banks or approved food wholesalers.

It is against the law to misuse food coupons in any way. The penalties are severe for violating food stamp regulations.

## **NUTRITION EDUCATION**

Education in food management—planning, buying, storing, and preparing—is an important part of the Food Stamp Program. This activity is carried out by Federal-State agencies, together with numerous private groups and individuals. Their goal is to help food stamp users get the most benefit from their increased food buying power.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Some low-income households who are eligible are not benefiting from the Food Stamp Program. Whether it's because of fear, ignorance, suspicion, lack of motivation, lack of transportation, physical or mental handicaps—there is usually a reason that can be overcome. And the reason can usually be dealt with by community volunteers and concerned citizens who can lend a helping hand.

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For further information concerning the Food Stamp Program, contact the local or State welfare agency or write Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

